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MR. ROOSEVELT IN CUBA

A soldier who had taken part in the Civil War was in the habit of dwelling on his exploits in talking with his son, till one day the boy said to him in perfect good faith, "Father, did anyone help you put down the Rebellion?"

Alone in Cuba: *Mr. Dooley.*

Is the hero of San Juan afraid? *T. C. Platt.*

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Was Mr. Roosevelt "the hero of San Juan?"

What was his connection with the famous circular letter, known as the Round Robin, and what was effected by it?

War was officially declared with Spain April 21, 1898. Mr. Roosevelt was then Assistant Secretary of the Navy. Among the various preparations for the conflict, Congress authorized the raising of three cavalry regiments from among the riders and riflemen of the Rockies and the Great Plains. Of one of these regiments Mr. Roosevelt was offered the command, but being, as he says, "entirely inexperienced in military work", he was quite content to go as Lieutenant Colonel, if his friend, Dr. Leonard Wood, would be the Colonel.

The official title of the regiment was the First U. S. Volunteers, but, says Mr. Roosevelt, the public promptly christened it the "Rough Riders", and though at first strongly opposing the use of this term, they afterwards adopted it themselves. The regiment was armed with the Krag-Jorgensen carbine used by the regular cavalry, with smokeless powder.

On Sunday, May 29, the regiment broke camp at San Antonio to take the cars for Tampa, Florida, from which place a portion of the corps, leaving their horses, sailed for Cuba and with the rest of the army landed at Holguin, a little village on the southern side of the eastern extremity of Cuba and about ten miles southeasterly of the city of Santiago, the capture of which became the chief object of the expedition. Just before leaving Tampa the regiment had been brigaded with the First (White) and Tenth (Colored) regular cavalry under Brigadier General Young. These constituted the Second Brigade. The First Brigade consisted of the Third and Sixth (White) and the Ninth (Colored) regular cavalry under Brigadier General Sumner. The two brigades formed the cavalry division under the command of Major General Wheeler.

Soon after the landing in June, General Young with the Rough Riders, then under command of Colonel Wood, and part of the Tenth and part of the First Cavalry took up the march toward Santiago. The next day they encountered the enemy at a place called Los Guasimas and a sharp engagement took place in which all the troops displayed great gallantry and finally drove the Spaniards from the field.

To the northward of Santiago was the village of El Caney, at the distance of about 6 miles. This was occupied by the Spaniards, and here there was a hill surmounted by a formidable block house or fort. Near Santiago was a range of hills known as San Juan Heights, running north and south, and covering the eastern approaches to the City. The highest point of the range, near the southern part, was San Juan Hill and this has an elevation of about 125 feet above the surrounding valley, which in its immediate neighborhood was clear meadow land. At the top of this hill was a large hacienda or farm-house, of brick. "The commanding qualities of this farm-house", says T. G. Vivian in his "Fall of Santiago," — "the Spanish engineers were quick to perceive, and the dwelling was easily transformed into a stronghold by piling up broken stone between the pillars of the piazza, and by cutting loopholes in the wall of the house, after the fashion found at El Caney, and according to the plan generally described in the chapters dwelling on the march of the men to the front. Close to the house stood a shed and this also had been transformed into an improvised fort. Along the extreme crest of the hill, facing the meadow-land, the Spanish engineers had dug a line of trenches in which the Spanish riflemen might stand and shoot down any living thing that ventured to cross the Paradise (i. e. the meadow-land) without any danger to themselves."

Farther to the northward and eastward of the northern part of the San Juan Heights was another elevation, known by various names, among others by the name of "Kettle Hill," so called by Mr. Roosevelt in his book, the "Rough Riders". It was about one-third of a mile distant from San Juan Hill and between it and the northern part of the heights, was a small pond about 200 yards in length and 100 yards in breadth. Upon this hill the Spaniards lay in trenches and

rifle pits, and progress was further obstructed as far as possible by barbed wires strung along from tree to tree.

On the day of the battle, Major General Shafter's plan contemplated the capture of El Caney, which it was thought would take about two hours, and his forces were then to swing around and join with the other troops on the right and thus to form the right wing of the line of battle. To accomplish this General Lawton was sent with some six thousand men. But the task proved much more difficult than was expected. There was desperate fighting on both sides and it was not till nearly the close of the day that the Spaniards, of whom few remained, either fled or were taken prisoners.

In the meantime the other troops moved forward, while expecting the capture of El Caney. Their march was a most toilsome one. Suffering from the extreme heat they were constantly exposed to a severe fire which they had little opportunity to return. They had to ford a stream. Finally, coming to a fork in the road, they separated, the two infantry divisions under General Kent turning to the left and the cavalry division under General Sumner (General Wheeler being at the time unwell), turning to the right, which brought them in front of Kettle Hill. "As we faced towards the Spanish Hills," says Colonel Roosevelt (Rough Riders p. 120) "my regiment was on the right with next to it and a little in advance, was the First Cavalry, and behind them the Tenth. In our front the Ninth held the right, the Sixth the centre and the Third the left, but on the jungle the lines were already overlapping in places. Kent's infantry was coming up farther to the left."

Col. Roosevelt with his Rough Riders were eager for the advance, and when the welcome command came he mounted his horse, and, as he says, his "crowded hour" began, and with it the crossing of the intervening land and the charge up Kettle Hill.

"The Ninth Regiment" continues Colonel Roosevelt, "was immediately in front of me and the First on my left, and these went up Kettle Hill with my regiment. The Third, Sixth and Tenth went partly up Kettle Hill, (following the Rough Riders and the Ninth and First) and partly between that and the block-house hill (i. e. San Juan Hill) which the

infantry were assailing. . . The three regiments went forward more or less intermingled, advancing steadily and keeping up a heavy fire. Up Kettle Hill Sergeant George Berry of the Fourth, bore not only his own regimental colors, but those of the Third, the color sergeant of the Third having been shot down; he kept shouting 'Dress on the colors, boys, dress on the colors!' as he followed Captain Ayres who was running in advance of his men, shouting and waving his hat."

He thus describes the start made by his own regiment: "As soon as I was on the horse I galloped forward a few yards until I saw the men were well started, and then galloped back to help Goodrich, who was in command of his troops, get his men across the road so as to attack the hill from that side. . . . Wheeling around I galloped toward the hill, passing the shouting, cheering, firing men and went up the lane, splashing through a small stream; when I got abreast of the ranch-building on the top of Kettle Hill, I turned and went up the slope."

He says: "Some forty yards from the top I ran into a wire fence and jumped off little 'Texas,' turning him loose, and he then ran up the hill. When the troops reached the top of the hill, there was much confusion and subsequently there was a good deal of discussion as to who had been on the hill first. Each of five Captains (two of them of the 9th regiment) was firm in the belief that his troup was first up."

"On the top of the hill," continues Colonel Roosevelt (Rough Riders p. 134), "was a huge iron kettle or something

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The height of San Juan Hill has been variously stated. By some, including Admiral Chadwick in his late "Spanish American War", it was estimated at one hundred and twenty-five feet; others have placed it as high as one hundred and fifty feet. Taking the mean of their estimates, and assuming that Kettle Hill was as high as San Juan, (of which there appears to be no evidence,) we have the height of the latter one hundred thirty-seven and a half feet, or say forty-six yards. Now, making every allowance for the slope of the hill, if Colonel Roosevelt dismounted forty yards from the top, as he says he did, it is clear that his famous ride up the hill, so renowned in art and story, must have been a very short one. The curious method of measurement is noticeable; 40 yards from the top of the hill, instead of six yards from the foot.

of the kind, probably used for sugar refining. Several of our men took shelter behind this. We had a splendid view of the charge on the San Juan blockhouse to our left, where the infantry of Kent, led by Hawkins, were climbing the hill." But there was little time for looking around. "As soon as the troops reached the top of Kettle Hill they were subjected to a heavy fire from the opposite hill from rifles and from one or two pieces of artillery." After firing at the Spaniards in the San Juan blockhouse, which they were obliged to stop for fear of injuring their own comrades, Colonel Roosevelt called upon the men to charge the next line of trenches on the hills in front and he, with Major Jenkins, he says: "started across the wide valley, which lay between us and the Spanish entrenchments. Captain Dimick, now in command of the Ninth, was bringing it forward; Captain McBlain had a number of Rough Riders mixed in with his troop and led them all together. The long-legged men like Greenway Goodrich, sharpshooter Proffit, and others, outstripped the rest of us and we had a considerable distance to go. Long before we got near them, the Spaniards ran, save a few here and there who either surrendered or were shot down."

It was here that Col. Roosevelt achieved his remarkable feat of killing a man with a pistol shot. "At about the same time," he says, "I also shot one. I was with Henry Bardshaw, running up at the double, and two Spaniards leaped from the trenches and fired at us not ten yards away. As they turned to run, I closed in and fired twice, missing the first and killing the second. My revolver was from the sunken ship

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It is curious to compare views taken by soldiers of the events upon the battlefield. Atteridge in his life of Joachim Murat, the famous cavalry leader, of the Napoleonic wars has the following, p. 295.

"Agar tells how more than once he (Murat) said to him at Naples, 'what gives me the most heartfelt satisfaction, when I think of my military career is, that I have never seen a man fall, killed by my hand. Doubtless, it is possible that in firing a pistol shot at enemies who attacked me, or whom I was pursuing, I have wounded some one, even mortally; but if so, I know nothing of it. If a man had ever fallen dead before me by my act, the picture of it would always be before me and would pursue me to the grave.'"

Maine, and had been given me by my brother-in-law, W. S. Cowles, of the Navy. At the time I did not know of Gould's exploit, and supposed my feat to be unique; and although Gould had killed his Spaniard in the trenches not very far from me, I never learned of it until weeks after."

Afterwards the troops pushed on, driving the Spaniards before them through a line of palm trees and over the crest of a chain of hills. When the colonel was reforming the troops, he received orders to halt and hold the hill. As night came on the firing gradually died away. So ended the battle.

Three days after, General Shafter summoned the Spanish commander to surrender.

It may be added here that the Colonel says in his narrative that Colonel Veile, having planted the standard of the First Cavalry on the hill, General Sumner rode up. "He was fighting his division in great form, and was always himself in the thickest of the fire:" but he seems to have been of no particular account for, from the time Kettle Hill was taken until he was told to halt, it would appear from the colonel's account that no orders of any kind were given by anyone but himself.

While these events were occurring the infantry divisions were hotly engaged in another part of the field. When the cavalry division under General Sumner had moved to the right, being then brought before Kettle Hill, General Kent with his division, as stated above, turned to the left in order to face that part of the ridge upon which stood the blockhouse above described, that is, San Juan Hill. He directed General Hawkins who was in the advance to move forward to the attack. One of the New York volunteer regiments was ordered to take the lead, but the enemy's fire steadily increasing in intensity was too much for the inexperienced soldiers and some confusion ensued. General Wickoff was ordered to move forward and put the troops in line for the attack. "As the brigade entered the narrow, winding path," says the Secretary of War in his history, "the sight of the numerous dead and wounded was enough to make the stoutest heart recoil." The head of the brigade reached the forks at 12.20 A. M. and hurried on the left. "This heroic brigade consisting of the Thirteenth, Ninth and Twenty-

fourth U. S. Infantry, speedily crossed the stream and were quitely deployed to the left of the lower fort. While personally superintending this movement, Colonel Wickoff was killed, the command of the brigade now devolving upon Lieut. Col. Worth, Thirteenth Infantry who immediately fell severely wounded, and then upon Lieut. Colonel Liscom, Twenty-fourth Infantry, who five minutes later also fell under the withering fire of the enemy. The command of the brigade then devolved upon Lieut. Col. E. P. Evers, Seventh Infantry."[1]

Thus there were four commanders of the brigade in the short space of some twenty minutes.

In the meantime two regiments of General Hawkins brigade turned down the main road to take their position on the right. Between these troops and the Spanish position, the way was obstructed by lines of barbed wire, and lay in the full view of the Spaniards and covered by their guns. Suddenly Lieutenant Parker of the artillery opened fire upon the San Juan ridge with three batteries of gatlings. Lieutenant Ord of General Hawkins' staff called for volunteers to support the 6th regiment and the whole line broke into the open, and attacked the hill.

Secretary Alger gives the following stirring account of the final charge:

"Multitudes of skirmishers poured out on the grass-covered valley, one cheering, shouting, rushing mass. Well in the lead was that grizzled veteran, General Hawkins. With bared head he led the charge, his white locks, erect figure and inspiring presence forming one of the most gallant and picturesque features of the fight. Waving his hat he called to his men to charge — Come on, come on — was his cry, and the crowd of yelling, running soldiers swiftly swept across the meadow, which had now become their aceldama. Above the staccato of the gatlings and the roar of shot and shell, — above the cheering and din of battle, was heard the shrill note of the bugle at Hawkins' side, sounding the advance. Several companies of the 6th and 16th infantry reached the slope first. When two-thirds up the hill, well in advance of the

[1] General Kent's Report.

main force, cries were heard of "Come back, our artillery is going to fire", and a bugle in the rear sounded "Cease firing", "Recall and Assembly". The line wavered and faltered, and the firing from our artillery and gatlings directed against the crest of San Juan, became dangerously close overhead. Captain Allen of the 6th Infantry, well upon the slope of the heights, shouted to his men, "Who will go with me to the top of that hill in spite of hell and the batteries?" Again the movement up the slope was started and again checked, but only for a moment at first, — then our artillery fire ceased. A moment of silence, like the awful instant that succeeds a vivid flash of lightning before the crash of thunder comes, and then that triumphant outcry of delight which victory in battle alone inspires. Up sprang the Infantry — up the slope and over the crest crowded the men in one long continuous line. The volume of our troops had broken the enemy so forcibly entrenched. The Spaniards had fled, leaving their flag and their dead on the heights which our army had taken. San Juan was ours!"

Such was the taking of San Juan Hill. Colonel Roosevelt took no part in it, except to view it from Kettle Hill, some third of a mile away, as has already appeared upon his own showing. He was in no way the hero of the fight. As for Kettle Hill, there can be no pretence that he led the division of which he commanded one regiment. He says himself (p. 131) that at the extreme right of the hill Captains Taylor, McBain and their men of the Ninth were first up. He goes on to say that each of the five captains, whom he names, was firm in the belief that his troop was first to reach the top. There is no doubt that Colonel Roosevelt behaved with great courage and gallantry in the fight, but so did hundreds of others on the field; in fact the same might be said of the whole army generally, and it is preposterous to claim that he was entitled to conspicuous honors. How, then, came he to be acclaimed "the Hero of San Juan?" Some suggestions may be made in answer to this question. As usual in later days, the colonel did not neglect the Press.

Edward Marshall, war correspondent, published a book entitled "Story of the Rough Riders". He was in Cuba with the army for a short time. He tells us that Colonel Wood of

the Rough Riders invited him at once to join the regimental mess in Cuba, and in his book we find the following:

"My own connection with the regiment began the day after they landed in Cuba (where I had gone as war-correspondent for the New York Journal) and lasted just twenty-four hours. It was then quickly put a stop to by a Mauser bullet. Not more than six weeks ago, Colonel, now Governor, Theodore Roosevelt, sent me a medal of the regiment and was good enough to say that he was glad to consider me a member of it. Like medals and like letters were sent to Richard Harding Davis, correspondent of the New York Herald and Scribner's Magazine, and to Captain McCormack of the regular army."

It must be admitted that the colonel was doing pretty well by Mr. Marshall, seeing that he was connected with the regiment for twenty-four hours only, to say nothing of Mr. Davis. Neither of these gentlemen were ungrateful, but the former seems to have passed all bounds in his adulation of his friend. Even in his preface, he takes occasion to say that the colonel and his men "led one of the most desperate charges in the history of warfare." "Then their next move was to the woods, the point from which they later charged with their gallant colonel at their head and drove the Spaniards from San Juan Hill."

Then (Marshall. "Story of the Rough Riders," p. 184), after the statement of the Rough Riders record, we have "And now comes the last and best of their second performance. They led the army in the charge up San Juan Hill."

On page 185, after speaking of Colonel Hamilton, who was killed and of his black heroes, he goes on to say: "That Colonel Hamilton was as brave a man as Colonel Roosevelt, and as brave a man as any man ever was, I do not doubt for a moment, but his regular army training did not stand him in good stead that day. He had been a soldier all his life and he did what a soldier is supposed to do — he did what he was told to do. He had been told to wait. Colonel Roosevelt understood the necessity of obeying orders as well as Hamilton did, but Colonel Roosevelt had not been turned out a fighting machine by years of discipline, and he thought for himself, when his superior officer failed to think for him. Colonel

Hamilton did not. So Colonel Roosevelt was the hero of San Juan Hill, although the opportunity for heroism had been before Colonel Hamilton just as long as it had been before Colonel Roosevelt. Hamilton, doubtless, saw the necessity for the charge as soon as Roosevelt did, but he waited for some superior to see it, too."

The temptation to present a few more of these gems of historic truth is great, but cannot be yielded to. This gentleman afterwards went upon the lecture platform. We shall meet him again at another point.

Jacob Riis, the intimate personal friend of Colonel Roosevelt, quoting a letter received from the latter after he was President of the United States, addressed to him as "Dear Jake", gives us the following in his book upon "Roosevelt the Citizen", p. —;

"How much of the quick success of the campaign was really due to the Roosevelt Rough Riders,—what fate hung in the balance, when their impetuous work saved the day, when retreat had been counselled and in effect decided,— we understood better as we learned the real state of the invading army on the night of June 30th. Let it be enough to say that it did save the day."

Riis gives no authority for this, and it is plain that he could give none from any book that was ever printed. Who then gave him the information? Who put this notion into his head?

Richard Harding Davis, one of the favored war correspondents as stated above, in his "Cuba & Porto Rico Campaign" writes as follows: (p. 219)

"I speak of Roosevelt first, because with General Hawkins who led Kent's division, notably the 6th and 16th regiments, he was without doubt the most conspicuous figure in the charge."

In *the* charge! One would suppose from reading this that there was only one, and that Hawkins and Roosevelt were in it together, instead of Roosevelt being a third of a mile away looking at Hawkins from the top of Kettle Hill.

Truly the colonel's politeness to the press correspondent was very far from being thrown away.

Another matter may be mentioned, before leaving this part of the subject.

In the "Rough Riders" (p. 132) is a picture of the charge of the regiment up the hill. There Colonel Roosevelt rides in advance, a striking figure. There is no one near him. The closest following soldiers, taking as a scale the height of the Colonel himself as pictured, are several feet in his rear. The picture is labeled "Charge of the Rough Riders at San Juan", but of course it was at Kettle Hill, because Colonel Roosevelt rode at no other place, having at the time dismounted and turned his horse loose at about 40 yards from the summit.

In General Wheeler's book upon the Spanish War is given the formal military report made by Colonel Roosevelt. In it the latter makes the following statement:

"Oliver B. Norton of B., who, with his brother, was by my side throughout the charging, was killed, fighting with marked gallantry." It will be seen that this statement flatly contradicts the picture.

It seems hard that this soldier's family and friends should not be able to find any record of his gallant conduct in the "Rough Riders," where the brave deeds of his companions-in-arms have been so faithfully and particularly chronicled. But so it is. The portion of Colonel Roosevelt's report concerning Norton is left out of his book, and no mention is made of him, except that, in the muster roll, it appears that a man of his name was killed.

Another interesting inquiry as to Colonel Roosevelt's services in Cuba is suggested by the famous "Round Robin", so called, a circular letter, addressed to General Shafter, and signed by the general officers including Colonel Roosevelt, who was, at the time, commanding a brigade. It set forth that the army was disabled by malarial fever to such an extent that its efficiency was practically destroyed and might be entirely destroyed by an epidemic of yellow fever, which would come in the future. It was written after a conference with General Shafter, who had asked these officers for an expression of their views.

In the meantime, Colonel Roosevelt, himself wrote a letter to General Shafter, which he delivered in person, just before the signing of the round robin.

Both letters are here given:

(*Colonel Roosevelt's letter.*)

"Major General Shafter,

Sir: In a meeting of the general and medical officers called by you at the Palace this morning we were all, as you know, unanimous in our views of what should be done with the army. To keep us here, in the opinion of every officer commanding a division or brigade, will simply involve the destruction of thousands. There is no possible reason for not shipping practically the entire command North at once.

Yellow fever cases are very few in the cavalry division, where I command one of the two brigades, and not one true case of yellow fever has occurred in this division, except among the men sent to the hospital at Siboney, where they have, I believe, contracted it.

But in this division there have been 1,500 cases of malarial fever. Hardly a man has yet died from it, but the whole command is so weakened and shattered as to be ripe for dying like rotten sheep, when a real yellow-fever epidemic instead of a fake epidemic like the present one, strikes us, as it is bound to do if we stay here at the height of the sickness season, August and the beginning of September. Quarantine against Malarial fever is much like quarantine against the tooth-ache.

All of us are certain that as soon as the authorities at Washington fully appreciate the condition of the army we shall be sent home. If we are kept here it will in all human possibility mean an appaling disaster, for the surgeons here estimate that over one-half of the army, if kept here over the sickly season, will die.

This is not only terrible from the standpoint of military efficiency of the flower of the American army, for the great bulk of the regulars are here with you. The sick list, large though it is, exceeding four thousand, affords but a faint index of the debilitation of the army. Not twenty per cent. are fit for active work.

Six weeks on the Maine coast, for instance, or elsewhere where the yellow-fever germ cannot possibly propagate, would make us all fit as fighting-cocks, as able as we are

eager to take a leading part in the great campaign against Havana in the fall, even if we are not allowed to try Porto Rico.

We can be moved North, if moved at once, with absolute safety to the country, although, of course it would have been infinitely better if we had been moved North or to Porto Rico two weeks ago. If there were any object in keeping us here, we would face yellow fever with as much indifference as we faced bullets. But there is no object.

The four immune regiments ordered here are sufficient to garrison the city and surrounding towns, and there is absolutely nothing for us to do here, and there has not been since the city surrendered. It is impossible to move into the interior. Every shifting of camp doubles the sick-rate in our present weakened condition, and, anyhow, the interior is rather worse than the coast, as I have found by actual reconnoissance. Our present camps are as healthy as any camps at this end of the island can be.

I write only because I cannot see our men, who have fought so bravely and who have endured extreme hardship and danger so uncomplainingly, go to destruction without striving as far as lies in me to avert a doom as fearful as it is unnecessary and undeserved.

Yours respectfully,
Theodore Roosevelt,
Colonel Commanding Second
Cavalry Brigade."

The following is the "Round Robin":

"We, the undersigned officers commanding the various brigades, divisions, etc., of the Army of Occupation in Cuba, are of the unanimous opinion that this army should be at once taken out of the island of Cuba and sent to some point on the Northern sea-coast of the United States; that it can be done without danger to the people of the United States; that yellow fever in the army at present is not epidemic; that there are only a few sporadic cases; but that the army is disabled by malarial fever to the extent that its efficiency is destroyed, and that it is in a condition to be practically en-

tirely destroyed by an epidemic of yellow fever, which is sure to come in the near future.

We know from our reports of competent officers and from personal observations that the army is unable to move into the interior and that there are no facilities for such a move if attempted, and that is could not be attempted until too late. Moreover, the best medical authorities of the island say that with our present equipment we could not live in the interior during the rainy season without losses from malarial fever, which is almost as deadly as yellow fever.

This army must be moved at once or perish. As the army can be safely moved now, the persons responsible for preventing such a move will be responsible for the unnecessary loss of many thousands of lives.

Our opinions are the result of personal observation, and they are also based on the unanimous opinion of our medical officers with the army, who understand the situation absolutely.

Joseph Wheeler,
Major-General Volunteers.
Samuel S. Sumner,
Commanding Cavalry Brigade.
William Ludlow,
Brigadier-General U. S. V. Commanding 12th Brigade 2nd. Div.
Adelbert Ames,
Brigadier-General U. S. V. Commanding 3rd Brigade, 1st Div.
Leonard Wood,
Brigadier-General Volunteers Commanding the City of Santiago.
Theodore Roosevelt,
Colonel Commanding Second Cavalry Brigade.
G. Ford Kent,
Major-General Volunteers Commanding 1st division 5th Corps.
S. C. Bates,
Major-General Volunteers Commanding Provisional Division 5th Corps.

H. W. Lawton,
Major-General Volunteers Commanding 2nd Division 5th Corps.
C. McKibbin,
Brigadier-General Commanding 2nd Brigade 2d Division.

The above letters were written about July 31st or August 1, and the "Round Robin" transmitted to Washington, but it was somewhat delayed, and was received by the War Department August 4th. It does not appear that General Shafter took any notice of the Roosevelt letter.

It should be particularly noticed that when General Lawton signed the round robin, he wrote the following endorsement:

> "In signing the above letter I do so with the understanding it has been seen and approved by the Commanding General. I desire to express it as my strong opinion that the best medical authorities of the Island and all the surgeons of the Command be also required to sign the paper. I desire also to express the opinion that the mandatory language used in the letter is impolite and unnecessary. Milder expressions to those in authority accomplish just as much. It is also my opinion that much of the fatal illness is due to homesickness and other depressing influences."

These letters were at once given to the press, as will be seen hereafter.

How far was Colonel Roosevelt the author or promotor of the round robin?

Riis in his Life of "Roosevelt the Citizen," has the following:

"The Rough Riders were not able to render their greatest service to the country through their gallant commander until Colonel Roosevelt's round robin, signed by all the general officers of the army in Cuba, startled the American people and caused measures of relief to be set on foot; the fearful truth that the army was perishing from prostration and fever was not known. . . . It is significant that the duty of

making the unwelcome disclosure fell to the Colonel of the Rough Riders. . . . The Colonel of the Rough Riders at the head of his men, much as I like the picture, is not half so heroic a figure to me, as Roosevelt in the hour of doubt and danger, shouldering the blame for the step he knew to be right."

The Colonel's friend Marshall, heretofore, is also ready here with his authentic information.

"It was at this point that the record-making genius of the Regiment again appeared and induced Colonel Roosevelt to violate all military rules. He had violated them once before when he led the charge at San Juan and that had turned out well. Perhaps he had gotten into the good habit of doing the thing which was obviously right, without waiting for the sign from superior officers who were obviously wrong. At any rate at this point, on his own responsibility, he sent to General Shafter the now famous letter. This had the desired effect. Just as the other officers had followed Roosevelt at San Juan in the attack on the Spaniards, they now followed him in the equally well considered effort to retreat from the fever. Roosevelt's letter was scarcely cold when the following round robin was sent in, and so the army was started North. Providence only knows what would have been started if Roosevelt had not sent this letter."

Colonel Roosevelt's own account of the matter is here given (Rough Riders, p. 211):

After stating that General Shafter about the last day of July had called a conference of all the division and brigade commanders and the chief medical officers he goes on to say, "It was deemed best to make some record of our opinion in the shape of a letter or report which would show that to keep the army in Santiago meant its absolute and helpless ruin, and that it should be at once recalled. At first there was naturally some hesitation on the part of the regular officers to take the initiative, for their entire future might be sacrificed. So I wrote a letter to General Shafter, reading over the rough draft to the various Generals and adopting their corrections. Before I had finished making these corrections, it was determined that we should send a circular letter in behalf of all of us to General Shafter, and when I returned

from presenting him with one, I found this circular letter already prepared and we all of us signed it. Both letters were made public. The result was immediate. Within three days the army was ordered to be ready to sail for home."

Let us examine this statement. In the first place the colonel writes his own letter to General Shafter, and reads the rough draft for corrections. But before he had finished making the corrections, that is, before he had finished his own letter, the circular letter was determined upon, possibly, it may be conjectured, because upon mature deliberation the officers may have concluded that a letter signed by them all might possibly carry more weight than a letter signed by Roosevelt alone. It seems reasonable to suppose that Colonel Roosevelt on reflection might have fairly concluded that the circular letter, to be signed by all the officers including himself, and covering the same ground, might supersede his own and render it superfluous. But nothing of the kind seems to have occurred to him. So anxious was he to present his own letter, that he could brook no delay, but actually took it to General Shafter, before the round robin was prepared. This he signed after his return from delivering his own letter.

In view of these facts could anything be more ludicrous than Riis's talk about Roosevelt "shouldering the blame"?

Farther, observe the tone which the colonel of four months' standing adopts in addressing his commander-in-chief.

"*There is no possible reason* for not shipping practically the entire command North at once."

"We can be moved North, if moved at once, with absolute safety to the country, although of course, *it would have been infinitely better* if we had been moved North or to Porto Rico two weeks ago.

"If there were any object in keeping us here we would face yellow fever with as much indifference as we faced bullets. *But there is no object.*"

Why was Colonel Roosevelt so anxious to write and in hot haste to deliver his own letter, while the round robin expressing the views of all the officers upon precisely the same subjects was in process of preparation? The inevitable answer is that his letter was, in point of fact, intended not for General

Shafter's information but for the public solely. It enabled him to pose for a time as the preserver of the army, which in the hands of ignorant and incompetent officers was fast going to ruin. Suppose that by some unfortunate chance, General Shafter should not publish the round robin. But suppose that it was published. The colonel would then have been only one among many. So he took no chances, but got his own letter into General Shafter's hands with the least possible delay.

It will be noticed that in his account as given above Colonel Roosevelt says without hesitation or qualification — "The result was immediate; within three days the army was ordered to be ready to start for home."

Is it true that these orders were the "result" of the two letters or either of them?

The Secretary of War is explicit upon this point. He says in his History of the War (p. 269) "It was therefore generally believed that the "Round Robin" was responsible for the orders issued from the War Department for the return of the 5th Corps and for the selection of Montauk Point. As a matter of fact it had nothing to do with either."

Does the documentary evidence sustain the secretary's statement? Let us look at this, carefully observing dates.

On the 12th of July, some eighteen days prior to the meeting of the officers with General Shafter, the latter telegraphed to the Secretary of War as follows, having previously, on the 9th of July mentioned three cases of yellow fever:

> "The serious part of the situation is that there are one hundred cases of yellow fever in this command and the opinion of the surgeons is that it will spread rapidly."

On the 13th of July the Secretary of War directed that as soon as the military situation should admit the troops should be withdrawn from proximity to the infected cases and encamped on high ground near the coast; but he adds that there were 400 of the enemy 25 miles to the North, and 1000 at Holguin and 7,500 at Guantanamo, making an army outside of Santiago larger than our own. Therefore the military situation would not admit at that time of the withdrawing of the troops.

July 14th. It was again explained by the Secretary of War to General Shafter that as soon as the surrender of the Spaniards was accomplished the 5th Army Corps (that is the whole army) was to be put into camp near Santiago, but above the fever belt. "If later, it is found advisable to bring your troops away, it will be done. Every possible aid in the possession of the government will be given you."

Afterwards the Secretary telegraphed to General Shafter as follows:

> "The Secretary of War expects that you will take the fever question into immediate consideration. How far will it be possible to place the command above the fever belt and how soon? An early report on the situation is requested."

July 18th, Shafter replied, "Troops will be put in good camp as soon as possible. I put the cavalry division out this A. M., but until prisoners are sent away it will not be safe to send other troops to higher camp."

July 23 the following dispatch was sent to General Shafter:

> "The Secretary of War asks for report on fever conditions and what progress is made in getting troops to higher grounds and how effective is this going to be. . . . As soon as it can be done with safety, *it is the intention to bring the entire 5th Corps* (that is, the entire army) North *for rest and recuperation.*"

On the same day, July 23rd, General Shafter replied:

"It is out of the question to move any more troops, until the prisoners are started for Spain and the railroad is repaired."

July 26th, the Surgeon-General was directed by the War Department to proceed to Montauk Point, Long Island, and report on the situation of that place as a camp of recuperation.

July 28th, notice was given to General Shafter as follows:

"We have selected Montauk Point for your command when it can be moved."

August 3rd he was directed "To move to the United States such of the troops under your command as are not required for duty at Santiago. You can use for that purpose the transports now at Santiago and such others will be furnished you as rapidly as possible as you may wire may be necessary."

From the above it appears that Colonel Roosevelt's positive and reckless statement that the removal of the army was the "result" of the letters received at Washington, August 4, was wholly without foundation.

Here are given messages passing between the Secretary of War and General Shafter.

White House, Washington,
August 4, 1898.

General Shafter, Santiago.

At this time, when peace is talked of, it seems strange that you should give out your cable signed by your general officers, concerning the condition of your army to the Associated Press. . . . without permission of the War Department. You did not even await a reply to your communication.

R. A. Alger,
Secretary of War.

To which General Shafter replied:

Santiago de Cuba, Aug. 4, 1898.

Hon R. A. Alger, Secretary of War,
Washington, D. C.

The report (i. e. the round robin) was given out, as I have since learned, before it reached me. I called the general officers together to tell them what I proposed to do and to express to them my views and ask them to give me theirs. I found we all felt alike. Some one then proposed they write me a letter, setting forth their views, and I told them to do so. Meanwhile I wrote my telegram, and later it was handed in and forwarded, with the letter of the surgeons and the letter of these officers. It was not until some time after that I learned their letter had been given to the press. It was a foolish, improper thing to do, and I regret very much that it

occurred. . . . . I have been very careful about giving to the press any information, and I will continue to do so.

W. R. Shafter,
Major-General.

Concerning this matter Mr. Alger wrote as follows:

"Of the Round Robin itself I have no criticism to make. Gen'l Shafter invited the officers to a conference and himself telegraphed to the War Department their conclusions and recommendations which was entirely proper for him to do. But I do criticise the agency through which these alarming utterances were given to the world. The publication of the "Round Robin" at that time was one of the most unfortunate and regrettable incidents of the war. This communication did not, as commonly reported, result in a selection of Montauk Point; neither did it hasten the return of the Santiago army, as every possible effort had already been made, and was then making for the speedy repatriation of our troops. On the other hand the information this startling paper made known, not only brought terror and anguish to half the communities and neighborhoods in the land, but it returned to Cuba in due time to spread demoralization among our troops. It did more than this—it threatened and might have accomplished even an interruption of the peace negotiations then in progress between the United States and Spain. These negotiations had been inaugurated by Spain on the 26th July through M. Cambon, the ambassador of France, and had reached their most delicate stage, when the "Round Robin" with all its suggestions of panic and desertion, was made public in the four corners of the earth.

"Moreover, the publication of this official letter was a gross breach of army regulations and military discipline; and through the agency of it the enemy secured information regarding our situation when the government was anxious to conceal the facts until the acceptance of the demands of the United States could be assured."

This letter is given as it appears in Secretary Alger's History of the War. In Mrs. Hall's interesting and amusing book entitled "Rooseveltism Fact and Fable" may be found some statements in regard to the passage omitted.

Thus the question who wrote the round robin is of little importance compared with the question, who gave it to the Press?

In Col. Roosevelt's book, "Rough Riders", Appendix 6, page 280, is given the report of the Associated Press correspondent for the truth of which the Colonel vouches.

A part is as follows:—

"As an explanation of the situation the following letter from Col. Theodore Roosevelt commanding the First Cavalry to Gen'l Shafter, was handed by the latter to the correspondent of the Associated Press for publication."

Then follow, first, Col. Roosevelt's letter, then the Round Robin.

The latter, as given to the Associated Press, does not contain the signature of General Lawton nor the endorsement which he made when he signed the paper. Nor does either appear in the copy given in Col. Roosevelt's "Rough Riders". This endorsement contains indirectly, a severe criticism of the "mandatory tone" of the Colonel's own letter, which offends grievously in this respect. Of course it could not be permitted to appear.

Anyone may believe, who can, that General Shafter gave either of the letters to the Press.

Mr. Alger ends his chapter on the "Round Robin Incident" as follows:

"It would be impossible to exaggerate the mischievous and wicked effects of the "Round Robin". It afflicted the country with a plague of anguish and apprehension. There are martyrs in all wars, but the most piteous of these are the silent, helpless, heartbroken ones, who stay at home to weep and pray and wail,—the mother, the sister, wife and sweetheart. To their natural suspense and suffering these publications added the pangs of imaginary terrors. They had endured, through sympathy, the battle-field, the wasting hardships of the camp, the campaign in the tropics, the fever-stricken trench. They might at least have been spared this wanton torture, this impalpable and formless yet overwhelming blow."

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